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MOHAWK LANDS

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**Anarchie. Anarchia.
Anarchismus. Anarquía.
Anarki. Anarchy.**



**No matter where
you are, one symbol
says it all.**

AXE POLL TAX

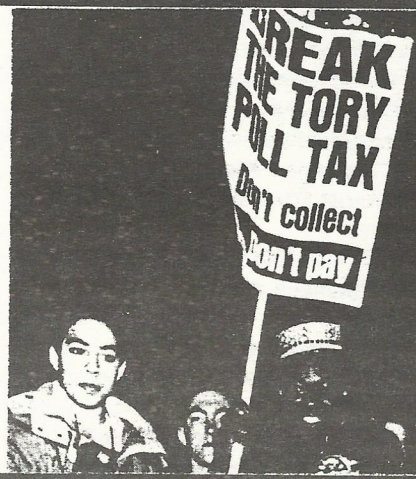
In early March, riots broke out across Britain as local Labour Party councils began to assess the cost to individuals for Prime Minister Thatcher's poll tax. The riots have been widespread and angry as has been well documented in the mainstream media. What the press has regularly failed to point out is that these riots are the culmination of working and lower middle class discontent with both Tory and Labour Party disinterest in their plight. Also missing from these reports are the innovative methods used by grass root organizations to resist the poll tax.

The old tax system in Britain was based on property and as such those with more property paid more tax. Thatcher's poll tax is assessed on an individual basis; everyone, rich or poor, paying the same amount with some regional variation. This has meant a large increase in tax to be paid by the poor especially if they have large families. For example, Prince Charles will be paying \$35 more than his butler.

Press reports focussing solely on riots have given a false, distorted view of the actual events in Britain. In Scotland, where the tax was implemented April 1 1989, resistance

to the tax has been organized town by town and even street by street at the grass roots level. Opposition has been strong and inventive. Leaflet campaigns to inform the public have been initiated and organizing has centred on the two main aspects of

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Azanian Political Prisoners Call Hungerstrike

"Until the DeKlerk government accedes to our demands, we, the political prisoners in South Africa are embarking on Hungerstrike action".

Such were the words of 342 South African political prisoners in Robben Island prison who began a hungerstrike Monday, February 26.

Progressive organizations began immediately campaigning for the release of an estimated 700 political prisoners and support for the Robben Island hungerstrikers, responding to an appeal made by the UDF Western Cape general secretary Trevor Manuel at a meeting in Johannesburg on February, 26

where he announced that a hungerstrike "to the death" had started earlier that day.

The call to action has been echoed by Benson Fihla, the national president of the Association of Ex-Political prisoners, which was launched in Port Elizabeth last weekend to look after former political prisoners and returning exiles. The Nelson Mandela International Reception Committee and the Save the Patriots Campaign have also pledged their support for the strikers.

On February 28, over 1000 people held a solidarity night vigil which was addressed by released ANC cadre Bushy Mathe and the Pan African

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AZANIAN HUNGERSTRIKE

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Congress member Barney Desai. There was also a planned candlelight meeting to be held where the organizers hope the prisoners will be able to see their candles from Robben Island.

In a memorandum released several weeks ago the prisoners, who are drawn from the ranks of the ANC, the PAC and the Black Consciousness Movement demanded:

- the unconditional release of all political detainees, political prisoners and combatants
- the termination of all political trials
- the lifting of the state of emergency and
- the withdrawal of the South African Defense Force, kitskonstabels police and other agents of the apartheid regime;

The hungerstrikers also released a statement reading:

"We know that this weapon is more harmful to us than it is to those responsible for our plight. We are not blind to

its fatal consequences. Nonetheless what other avenue do we have besides this peaceful action? Seize the prison? Burn things down? Threaten the lives and property of the staff? No, that would be to give the enemy an excuse to clean its image before the eyes of the people of reason the world over.

"Ours is a peaceful action which hits at us in the main. However it is also a disciplined manner of telling our people and the world that here in the bowels of the beast we shall not succumb. We shall resist injustice wherever and whenever it manifests itself.

"If through the action that we have taken, we shall have roused anger in our people, solidarity from our actions, whatever the consequences, it shall not have been in vain."

The prisoners also submitted an 11 page document outlining their demands for improvements to prison conditions. According to the ANC cadres, these conditions have been "progressively deteriorating and de-

generating in proportion to the rate of so-called reform and renewal pursued by the Nationalist government."

The hungerstrikers demands cover food, medical care, study, visits, letters, warders' conduct, magazines, newspapers, recreation and welfare.

As far as we know, after a month, the hungerstrike continues. Although it is very difficult to get a steady flow of information around this out of South Africa, we will keep you as up-to-date as possible about the hungerstrike in future issues of Ecomedia.

And as most information we read in the mainstream media is at best, incomplete, and at worst, withheld or distorted, it will interest many of you to know that a local organization called Azania Now, in cooperation with the Kensington Market Drum, has begun to hold regular open forums about the current state of the struggle in Azania, or South Africa. (See the calendar on page 4 for information on time and location.)

NEWS BRIEFS

BOLTON, NORTH CAROLINA- A Columbus County grand jury has refused to indict the state trooper who murdered Sidney Bowen, the first black mayor of Bolton. The trooper stopped Bowen in front of his house, beat him on the head with a weapon, and shot him at least four times, once in the back of the head, while Bowen's family watched from the house in horror. Police claimed that

Bowen was intoxicated and attacked the cop with a flashlight, but this does not explain why he would have been shot from behind. (Periscope, 19-3-90.)

ESKILSTUNA, SWEDEN-Three Plowshares activists here disarmed the "Carl-Gustav" bazooka at the FFV-Ordinance weapons factory, using ordinary hammers covered with pictures of their children, wives and other family members. According to reliable sources, this bazooka has

been used in Vietnam, and during the 1980s was smuggled to Saudi Arabia via Great Britain. The USA is a big buyer of bazookas. In a statement distributed to employees, the activists proclaimed that "It is the responsibility of each and every one of us to contribute to disarm-ament." This was the second Plowshares action in Sweden, the first being disarming by two activists of a Haubits 77A cannon en route to India; they were fined over 70,000 Swedish Crowns.

Multicultural Bandwagon Fills Up

Bob Rae Climbs on Board with Feds Propaganda Campaign

Politicians proclaiming the values of multiculturalism has become so fashionable that Bob Rae, the Ontario NDP leader, has written a song called "We're all in the same boat" (We may all be in the same boat, probably the Titanic, but some of us travel first class while others wallow in the bilge tanks). The federal Multiculturalism Office has plastered Toronto with signs proclaiming "Together we're better; let's eliminate racial discrimination in Canada." It's intriguing to note that the words "racial discrimination" are used rather than that ugly word racism. They also distribute an information package with lots of pictures of smiling high school kids.

In the booklets and pamphlets inside the information package are stories, bad poetry and art by high school students, a resource guide to publications available and a list of "21 things to do," such as holding public meetings on rights or making posters. Also available are two multicultural proclamations signed by the prime minister and suitable for mounting.

The articles written by the white high school students (who outnumber ethnic minorities by about two to one here) seem simplistic and upbeat, except for one. Most of the stories say basically, "I talked to a person of colour once and my racism disappeared." One story notes that an Indian girl "turned out to be an excellent student and athlete, and contributed to school projects and fundraisers." (What if she hadn't? Would the writer still be a racist?) There is one good piece by a white student who is

president of an anti-racist student-teacher group. The stories by immigrant teenagers are more enlightening and much less upbeat, describing how they have been affected by racism.

There is also a quiz you can take to find out whether you're a racist. This quiz is where you'll find the only photos of Blacks inside the package, except for the poster. The sentiments expressed are deep and heartfelt. For example; "I've taken the time to talk to someone of another race—face to face—who at first I thought was different. It made a big difference!"

A half-hearted attempt like this program does little to make up for government's ongoing institutionalized practice of racism. The same government that brings us this multiculturalism blitz has also brought us such policies as:

- ongoing refusal to settle Native land claims, and continued harassment of Innu people by low level flying over their lands
- immigration policies that discriminate against non-caucasians, and deportation of many third world refugees to face certain torture and death in their home countries
- foreign policies that emphasize the right of predominantly white countries to independence (ie. eastern Europe) while supporting denial of such rights by the USA and its allies (ie. El Salvador, East Timor)
- the "war on drugs" which encourages police and local officials to de-

prive poor and minority groups of their civil liberties.

Grass roots organizations, however, such as the Women's Coalition Against Racism and Police Violence or the Black Action Defence Committee, can address real problems and speak out against racism in a way that a superficial government public relations program will not. There is no talk of real change in this package. There is no mention of racially motivated job discrimination, beatings or deaths. Blacks are not represented among the written submissions here, and only one native person seems to be represented. No one over twenty appears in the package. There are no concrete suggestions for dealing with for example, racist landlords, police or employers. The whole package is slick, glossy, upbeat and simplistic.

This campaign is merely a case of the conservative government setting the guidelines for discussion, defining the parameters allowed and trying to limit discussion at the same time that it pretends to be starting it and leading the way. It seems hardly likely that we can expect more from a government that gains power from institutionalizing racism than a superficial ad campaign telling us how they are actually fighting racism. The irony is that the government now can claim to be doing something about racism, and even to be taking a leading role in fighting it.



AXE POLL TAX

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the tax, namely registration and payment. People have slowed the registration process by mailing in the wrong information or claiming the forms got lost. Workers assigned to deliver the registration forms have refused to do so in some cases. A computer virus was let loose in the government system which deleted the names of living people and inserted the names of deceased persons. Although failure to register is a criminal offense, 1 in 4 people have not registered in Scotland.

Non-payment of the poll tax, once one is registered, results in only a 10% fine being levied but repossession of property by the local sheriff (in what is termed a warrant sale) may occur. When the local resistance groups are alerted to a possible repossession action, up to 200 people will converge on the home in question and prevent the sheriffs from getting inside.

In England, organizing of much the same sort has occurred. Local councils have been occupied by protestors. In one case, 20 people dressed as Robin Hood and took over a council meeting. (In Maidstone a Conservative drinking club has moved to secede from the local Conservative party.)

The councils themselves have been targets for protest because it is they who set the amount of the poll tax in their municipality. As even Thatcher herself has pointed out (looking for a scapegoat) the majority of these councils are under Labour party control and they haven't lifted a finger to stop or even delay the implementation of the tax.

The riots themselves, then have been a result of massive frustration on the part of the people hurt most by the poll tax. With both Labour and the Conservatives lining up for a share of the loot the explosion was inevitable. Many demonstrations have been peaceful but the majority of these have gone unreported. When violence has broken out it has been at the expense of the rich. The buildings attacked and looted have been almost exclusively large department stores or expensive restaurants or shops. The South African consulate was also attacked. It can hardly be said that the targets were random.

Incidents of police violence and intimidation are also widespread. Truncheons have been used as a matter of course on demonstrators and in Southapmton protestors were dragged by their ankles down concrete steps. A man in Oldham, Lancashire, wrote to a local paper to protest the tax and was visited by the local bobbies and forced to print a retraction.

Press reports of left wing radicals inciting riots do not give any insight into the depth of resistance to the poll tax in Britain. Though many of these groups are at the forefront of the protests they can hardly be said to be leading what are so obviously uprisings of sheer frustration and anger.

In Canada we could learn a few things from the poll tax resistance movements in Britain in our fight against the GST. We can only hope complacency has not dulled our anger or initiative to fight.

What's Happening

April 3, 10 and 17: CBC's Ideas program will air "Analyzing Psychiatry". The 3 part series on psychiatric treatment, institutions and inmates was researched and written by Irit Shimrit, editor of *Phoenix Rising: the Voice of the Psychiatrized*. The shows are on CBC AM radio (740) at 9:05 pm.

April 18: the third "Azania-What Now" public forum will be held at the Cecil St. Community Centre, 58 Cecil St. 925-6800.

April 18: Defend the Gains of the Nicaraguan Revolution. A benefit dance for Tools for Peace with Latin salsa band Fantasia. \$8.00/\$6.00 students, unwaged; 9:00 pm at the Bamboo, 312 Queen St. W.

April 18, 19 and 21 at 10 p.m.: AIDS activist Michael Smith performs his play PWLA (person livid with AIDS) at the Factory Studio Cafe, 125 Bathurst St. With participation by the music group Steal This Book.

Friday April 27th, 8PM: Bernard Ominayak, Chief of the Lubicon Lake Cree Nation speaks at the Medical Sciences Auditorium, 1 King's College Circle, on their land struggle and the Treaty Alliance. Featuring opening prayer by Lubicon elder and Eagle Heart Drummers, Gayap Rhythm Drummers, and more. Admission \$3.

May 11 to 15: A festival of alternatives to psychiatric oppression will occur directly in front of the American Psychiatric Association annual meeting, with a nearby counter-conference, in New York City. There will be simultaneous public actions in a variety of North American cities. For more information, contact Phoenix Rising.